Bulletin of The Art Institute of Chicago

JULY-AUGUST 1978 VOLUME 72 NUMBER 4

POMPEII COMES TO THE ART INSTITUTE!

A street in Pompeii with Mount Vesuvius in the background, 1963

Child's head for a fountain spout
1st century A.D. Excavated at Pompeii
The Art Institute of Chicago
Gift of Mrs. Henry Pope, Jr., 1961.108

Drawing of a typical street fountain in Pompeii, indicating how the Art Institute head might have looked in place.

Art Institute Members will have a rare opportunity to discover the fascinating world of *Pompeii AD 79* when the exhibit is on view in the Morton Wing from August 12 through November 12. The exhibition, which began its American tour at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, includes the most comprehensive display of relics of Pompeii ever seen outside of Italy.

When Mount Vesuvius erupted in August, AD 79, Pompeii and its people were buried under a deadly blanket of ash and pumice. The city remained covered for 16 centuries. Excavation, started in 1680, revealed an amazing array of forgotten treasures. *Pompeii AD 79* gives viewers a chance to see more than 300 magnificent examples of gold jewelry, silverware, sculpture, mosaics, and frescoes.

The Art Institute looks forward to giving its Members the opportunity to explore the beauty and intrigue of Pompeii.

E. LAURENCE CHALMERS, JR.
President, The Art Institute of Chicago

This issue of the *Bulletin* is an invitation to Members to visit *Pompeii AD 79*. The Members' Priority Pass procedure, described on page 24, allows Members to make an advance reservation and should virtually eliminate long waits in line. The expanded lecture schedule offered by Museum Education will include Saturday and holiday lectures. Visitors to the museum will find a model of the site of Pompeii in Gunsaulus Hall, the African collection and American Art of the 60s and 70s installed in the new galleries on the museum's east side, and a wide range of departmental exhibitions on view throughout the building.

The *Pompeii AD 79* catalogue is a unique two-volume publication that will be sold at $4.50 each or $8.00 for the set in the Museum Store, the special Pompeii Shop and near the museum entrances. Volume I concerns Pompeii: the town, the people, and the arts and includes many illustrations in both color and black and white. Volume II concerns the objects in the exhibition and includes the catalogue entries and a black and white illustration of each object.

The objects in *Pompeii AD 79* are on loan from The National Archaeological Museum, Naples and the Pompeii Antiquarium. The exhibition has been made possible through grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and Xerox Corporation.

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AD 79: EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT OF THE ERUPTION OF MOUNT VESUVIUS

The following two letters* to the distinguished Roman historian Tacitus are probably the most famous of the Younger Pliny's (61/62 AD-113 AD) 247 letters of personal correspondence. He was seventeen at the time Vesuvius erupted and these two letters are the earliest recorded description of the eruption of a volcano and are regarded as the beginning of the science of volcanology.

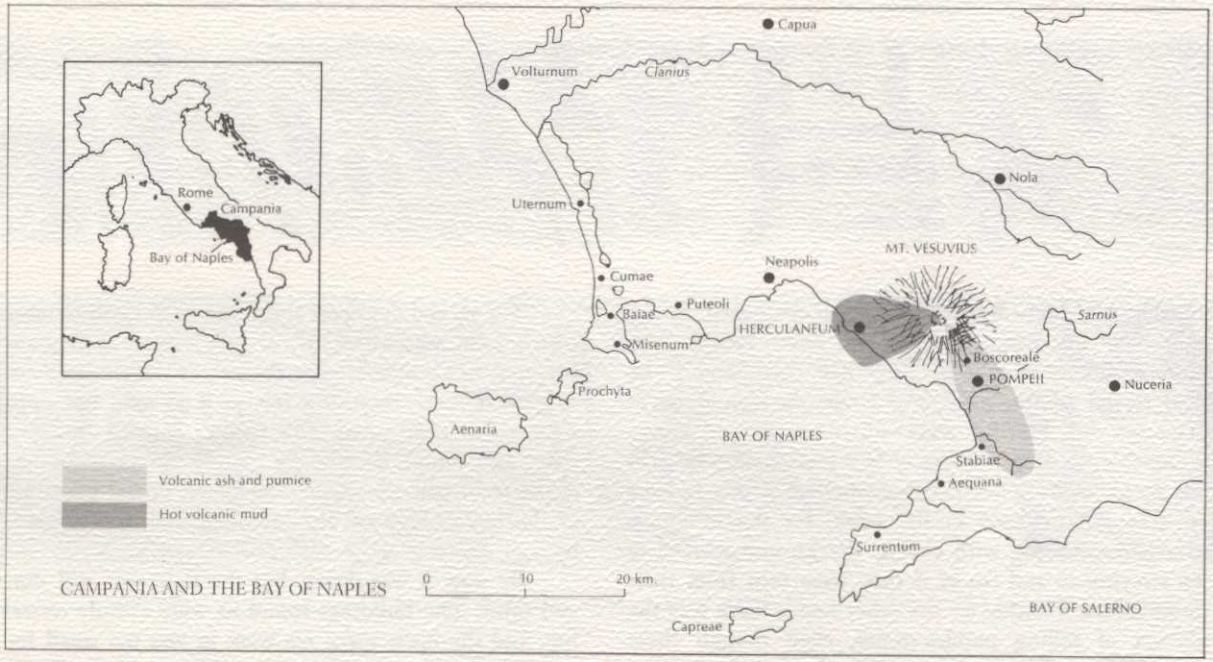
16. To Cornelius Tacitus

Thank you for asking me to send you a description of my uncle's death so that you can leave an accurate account of it for posterity; I know that immortal fame awaits him if his death is recorded by you. It is true that he perished in a catastrophe which destroyed the loveliest regions of the earth, a fate shared by whole cities and their people. . . .

My uncle was stationed at Misenum [see map] in active command of the fleet. On 24 August, in the early afternoon, my mother drew his attention to a cloud of unusual size and appearance. He had been out in the sun, had taken a cold bath, and lunched while lying down, and was then working at his books. He called for his shoes and climbed up to a place which would give him the best view of the phenomenon. It was not clear at that distance from which mountain the cloud was rising (it was afterwards known to be Vesuvius); its general appearance can best be expressed as being like an umbrella pine, for it rose to a great height on a sort of trunk and then split off into branches, I imagine because it was thrust upwards by the first blast and then left unsupported as the pressure subsided, or else it was borne down by its own weight so that it spread out and gradually dispersed. In places it looked white, elsewhere blotched and dirty, according to the amount of soil and ashes it carried with it. My uncle's scholarly acumen saw at once that it was important enough for a closer inspection, and he ordered a boat to be made ready, telling me I could come with him if I wished. I replied that I preferred to go on with my studies, and as it happened he had himself given me some writing to do.

As he was leaving the house he was handed a message from Rectina, wife of Tascus whose house was at the foot of the mountain, so that escape was impossible except by boat. She was terrified by the danger threatening her and implored him to rescue her from her fate. He changed his plans, and what he had begun in a spirit of inquiry he completed as a hero. He gave orders for the warships to be launched and went on board himself with the intention of bringing help to many more people besides Rectina, for this lovely stretch of coast was thickly populated. He hurried to the place which everyone else was hastily leaving, steering his course straight for the danger zone. He was entirely fearless, describing each new movement and phase of the portent to be noted down exactly as he observed them. Ashes were already falling, hotter and thicker as the ships drew near, followed by bits of pumice and blackened stones, charred and cracked by the flames: then suddenly they were in shallow water, and the shore was blocked by the debris from the mountain. For a moment my uncle wondered whether to turn back, but when the helmsman advised this he refused, telling him that Fortune stood by the courageous and they must make for Pomponianus [a friend] at Stabiae. . . . Pomponianus had . . . already put his belongings on board ship, intending to escape if the contrary wind fell. This wind was of course full in my uncle's favour, and he was able to bring his ship in. . . .

Meanwhile on Mount Vesuvius broad sheets of fire and leaping flames blazed at several points, their bright glare emphasized by the darkness of night. My uncle tried to allay the fears of his companions by repeatedly declaring that these were nothing but bonfires left by the peasants in their terror, or else empty houses on fire in the districts they had abandoned. Then he went to rest and certainly slept, for as he was a stout man his breathing was rather loud and heavy and could be heard by people coming and going



CAMPANIA AND THE BAY OF NAPLES

Angelica Kauffmann,
English, 1741-1807
Pliny the Younger and his Mother at Misenum, 79 A.D.
Oil on canvas, H. 1.03 m
Courtesy The Art Museum, Princeton University
Gift of Franklin H. Kissner

outside his door. By this time the courtyard giving access to his room was full of ashes mixed with pumice-stones, so that its level had risen, and if he had stayed in the room any longer he would never have got out. He was wakened, came out and joined Pomponianus and the rest of the household who had sat up all night. They debated whether to stay indoors or take their chance in the open, for the buildings were now shaking with violent shocks, and seemed to be swaying to and fro as if they were torn from their foundations. Outside on the other hand, there was the danger of falling pumice-stones, even though these were light and porous; however, after comparing the risks they chose the latter. . . . As a protection against falling objects they put pillows on their heads tied down with cloths.

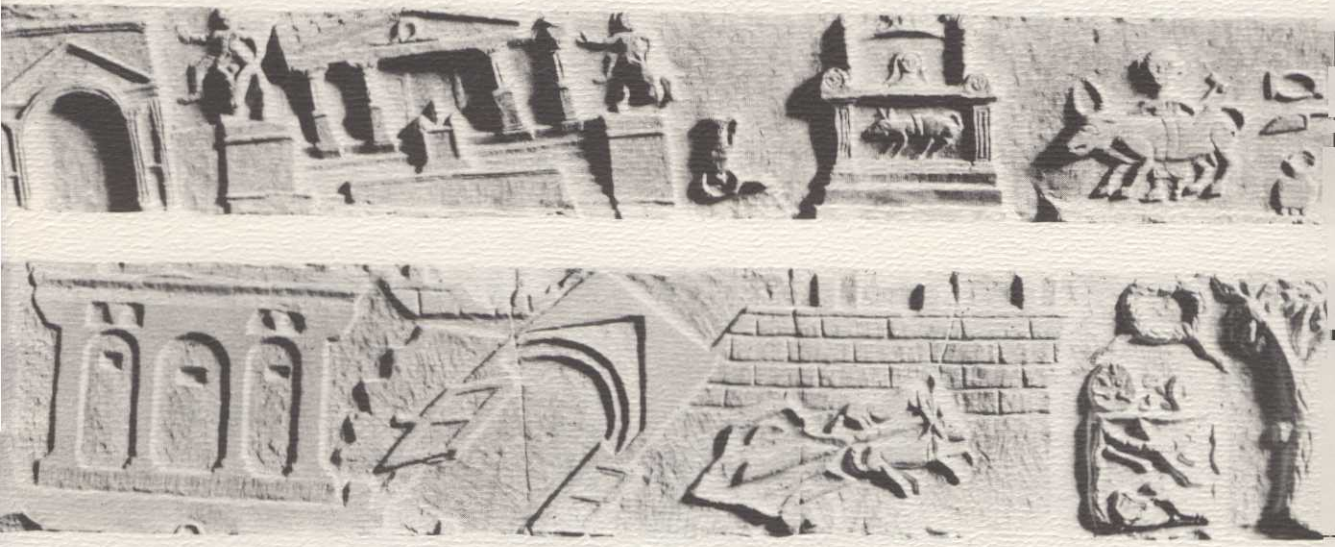
Elsewhere there was daylight by this time, but they were still in darkness, blacker and denser than any ordinary night, which they relieved by lighting torches and various kinds of lamp. My uncle decided to go down to the shore and investigate on the spot the possibility of any escape by sea, but he found the waves still wild and dangerous. A sheet was spread on the ground for him to lie down, and he repeatedly asked for cold water to drink. Then the flames and smell of sulphur which gave warning of the approaching fire drove the others to take flight and roused him to stand up. He stood leaning on two slaves and then suddenly collapsed, I imagine because the dense fumes choked his breathing by blocking his windpipe which was constitutionally weak and narrow and often inflamed. When daylight returned on the 26th—two days after the last day he had seen—his body was found intact and uninjured, still fully clothed and looking more like sleep than death. . . .

20. To Cornelius Tacitus

So the letter which you asked me to write on my uncle's death has made you eager to hear about the terrors and hazards I had to face when left at Misenum . . . . For several days past there had been earth tremors which were not particularly alarming because they are frequent in Campania: but that night the shocks were so violent that everything felt as if it were not only shaken but overturned. My mother hurried into my room and found me already getting up to wake her if she were still asleep. We sat down in the forecourt of the house, between the buildings and the sea close by. . . .

By now it was dawn, but the light was still dim and faint. The buildings round us were already tottering, and the open space we were in was too small for us not to be in real and imminent danger if the house collapsed. This finally decided us to leave the town. We were followed by a panic-stricken mob of people . . . who hurried us on our way by pressing hard behind in a dense crowd. Once beyond the buildings we stopped, and there we had some extraordinary experiences which thoroughly alarmed us. The carriages we had ordered to be brought out began to run in different directions though the ground was quite level, and would not remain stationary even when wedged with stones. We also saw the sea sucked away and apparently forced back by the earthquake: at any rate it receded from the shore so that quantities of sea creatures were left stranded on dry sand. On the landward side a fearful black cloud was rent by forked and quivering bursts of flame, and parted to reveal great tongues of fire, like flashes of lightning magnified in size. . . .

Soon afterwards the cloud sank down to earth and covered the sea; it had already blotted out Capri and hidden the promontory of Misenum from sight . . . . Ashes were already falling, not as yet very thickly. I looked round: a dense black cloud was coming up behind us, spreading over the earth like a flood. 'Let us leave the road while we can still see,' I said, 'or we shall be knocked down and trampled underfoot in the dark by the crowd behind.' We had scarcely sat down to rest when darkness fell, not the dark of a moonless



Casts of two marble reliefs showing scenes of Pompeii during the earthquake of AD 62, from the House of L. Caecilius Jucundus.

or cloudy night, but as if the lamp had been put out in a closed room. You could hear the shrieks of women, the wailing of infants, and the shouting of men . . . . Many besought the aid of the gods, but still more imagined there were no gods left, and that the universe was plunged into eternal darkness for evermore . . . . A gleam of light returned, but we took this to be a warning of the approaching flames rather than daylight. However, the flames remained some distance off; then darkness came on once more and ashes began to fall again, this time in heavy showers. We rose from time to time and shook them off, otherwise we should have been buried and crushed beneath their weight . . . .

At last the darkness thinned and dispersed like smoke or cloud; then there was genuine daylight, and the sun actually shone out, but yellowish as it is during an eclipse. We were terrified to see everything changed, buried deep in ashes like snowdrifts. We returned to Misenum where we attended to our physical needs as best we could, and then spent an anxious night alternating between hope and fear. Fear predominated, for the earthquakes went on, and several hysterical individuals made their own and other people's calamities seem ludicrous in comparison with their frightful predictions. But even then, in spite of the dangers we had been through and were still expecting, my mother and I had still no intention of leaving until we had news of my uncle. . . .

It is ironic that Pliny did not accompany his uncle and take a closer look at the exploding Mount Vesuvius, since today volcanic eruptions are ranked by severity and the most violent are sometimes called Plinian.

What Tacitus did with the information Pliny sent him is unknown, as is the fate of Rectina whom the Elder Pliny set out to rescue; however, Pliny's many letters are a revealing account of his life as a lawyer, an official of the Roman Empire and the owner of several villas. The excavations at Pompeii, Herculaneum and nearby villas give us places as they once were. Pliny's letters "fill in the spaces . . . with the voices of people."

**The Letters of the Younger Pliny,* translated by Betty Radice (Penguin Classics, 1969), pp. 166-168, 170-173, copyright Betty Radice, 1963, 1969. Reprinted by permission of Penguin Books Ltd.

8th Century B.C.
The Greeks begin intensive colonization of South Italy, later to be known as Magna Graecia, Great Greece. The first Greek settlements are around the Bay of Naples (see map), on the island of Ischia (Aernia) and then at Cumae. Pompeii itself shows signs of habitation by a native Italic people known as Oscans.

7th Century B.C.
Pompeii comes under Etruscan influence from strongholds in Campania such as Capua. Neapolis, or New City, the modern Naples is settled by Cumaeans about 600.

6th Century B.C.
A Greek temple of the Doric order is built at Pompeii around the middle of the century, indicating some Greek influence at this time. There is continuing influence from Etruria, which is now at the peak of its power and gaining control of Campania.

5th Century B.C.
Etruscan influence in South Italy declines, after a defeat at sea in 474 by Greeks from Sicily. The Samnites, an Italic people from the mountainous interior east of Campania, expand their territories, occupying Capua and, in 420, Cumae. The fortifications of Pompeii are enlarged, probably at this time. By the end of the century Pompeii has become a Samnite town, still, however, using the Oscan language.

4th Century B.C.
The Samnites carry on intermittent warfare against the growing power of Rome. In 310 Pompeii and its neighbor Nuceria, another Samnite town, repulse a plundering raid by Roman ships. The conquests of Alexander the Great introduce the Hellenistic era throughout the Mediterranean world, bringing artistic influences which will be echoed in the art found at Pompeii.

3rd Century B.C.
By 290 the Samnite towns have become Roman socii (allies), but the people are not given Roman citizenship. Rome awakens to a taste for Greek art and culture when soldiers return from Sicily after the 1st Punic War.

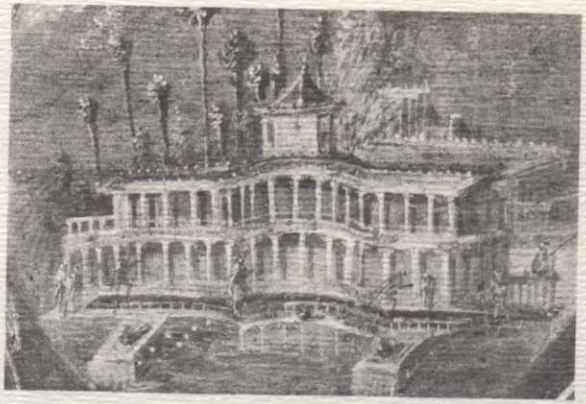
2nd Century B.C.
Admiration and imitation of Hellenistic culture increase as Roman soldiers bring back valuable works of art from wars in Greece and Asia Minor. The arts and crafts of Campania are stimulated as wealthy Romans being to build villas there.

1st Century B.C.
The Samnites seize the chance to fight against Rome in the Social Wars (the revolt of the Italic allied towns), and in 89 the Roman general L. Cornelius Sulla besieges both Pompeii and Herculaneum. A graffito on one of the towers of Pompeii names Sulla.

Oscan inscription recording the building of the Samnite Palaestra (a public exercise ground) in the later 2nd century B.C.

Youthful head of Hercules on Romano-Campanian didrachm, struck at Rome c. 269-266 B.C. for use in southern Italy.

House of the Faun, second century B.C. Pompeii, 1963



In 80 he installs a Roman colony of veterans at Pompeii, administered by his nephew P. Sulla. L. Sulla rewards his faithful followers with numerous Campanian villas confiscated from those who fought against him. The "villa habit" becomes so popular that many Romans own several; Cicero, for example, owns three, one at Pompeii. Villae marittimae, seaside villas, are built for pleasure and those inland, known as villae rusticae, are profitable farms. Latin now replaces Oscan as the official language and the Romanization of Campania proceeds. L. Sulla rules as dictator in Rome, dying at his Campanian villa in 78. Julius Caesar crosses the River Rubicon in 49 and is made dictator in the same year. He is assassinated in 44. In 31, Caesar's adopted son Octavian wins the battle of Actium and in 27 receives the title Augustus.

1st Century AD

Tiberius succeeds Augustus in the year 14, Caligula follows in 37, Claudius in 41. From 54 to 68 Nero is Emperor. In 59, according to the historian Tacitus, the Senate orders the amphitheater at Pompeii closed for 10 years because of a brawl there between the Pompeiians and the Nucerians during a gladiatorial combat. The riot is pictured in a wall painting and in a graffito from Pompeii.

An earthquake in 62, represented in two marble bas reliefs in a Pompeian home, badly damages the town. There is much rebuilding, which can be detected in many of the excavated structures. 68 to 69 is known as the year of the three emperors, Galba, Otho and Vitellius. The first of the Flavian emperors, Vespasian, takes power in 69. Led by Spartacus, the gladiators of Capua rebel in 73 and are joined by thousands of slaves; the rebels hide out in the crater of Vesuvius shortly before their final defeat.

24 August AD 79

Vesuvius erupts.

Pompeii and nearby villas are buried in ashes and pumice; Herculaneum is engulfed in hot volcanic mud. The Emperor Titus, who has succeeded his father Vespasian, orders relief for the refugees. As the centuries pass even the towns' names fade from memory, although rumors of buried treasure persist.

16th Century

Inscriptions and many frescoed walls are discovered during the six-year construction of an underground canal through the hill known as Civita on the site of Pompeii.

17th Century

In 1631 there is an eruption of Vesuvius.*

Interest in the discoveries slowly develops among scholars and intensifies when more inscriptions are uncovered about 1680.

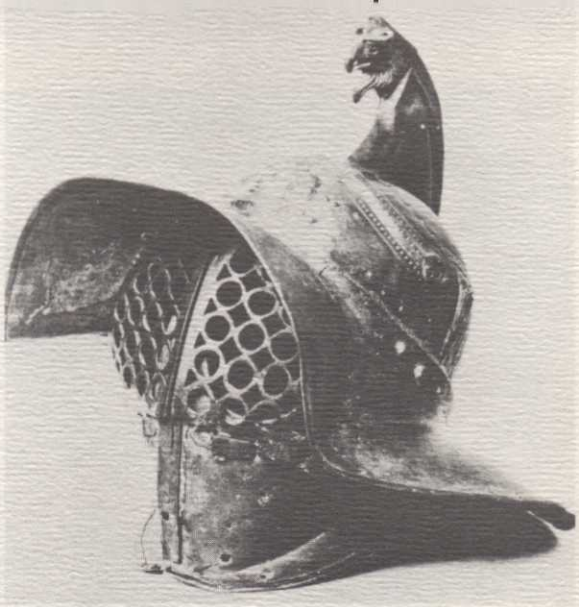
18th Century

Exploration on the site of Herculaneum begins when a peasant sinking a well turns up blocks of marble. A passage is dug in 1709 that lands in the middle of the theater. The treasure hunt is on! In 1738 an inscription identifies the site as Herculaneum. In 1748 Charles III of Bourbon, Spanish king of Naples, orders further exploration of the site of Pompeii and in 1763 an inscription is uncovered clearly identifying the buried town as Pompeii. Trea-

Portrait of Julius Caesar on a denarius, struck at Rome in 44 B.C.

Painting of a villa beside the sea (villa marittima), D. 25 cm
From Stabiae, Naples Museum

Portrait of a man and his wife, wall painting. H. 65 cm, W. 58 cm
From a house in Pompeii, Naples Museum



sures removed to the royal palace at Portici from both Pompeii and Herculaneum form the nucleus of the future collection of the National Archaeological Museum at Naples. Eruptions of Vesuvius take place in 1759, 1779 and 1794.

Enthusiastic support and money to pay diggers come from the French rulers of Naples early in the century. The forum and private buildings in its vicinity are uncovered at Pompeii between 1806 and 1832.

Further eruptions of Vesuvius occur in 1822, 1838 and 1850.

In 1860 Italy is united into one country under Italian rule. Guiseppe-Fiorelli begins the first scientific excavation at Pompeii, recording each object found and its relation to others nearby, leaving objects in place whenever possible, and clearing the site of rubble from old excavations. Pompeii's true rebirth begins. Fiorelli also invents the method of casting the forms of bodies buried in the lava and ashes, revealing details of clothing and physical appearance.

Vesuvius erupts in 1872.

A villa rustica is discovered by a farmer on his land near the village of Boscoreale. Fiorelli begins the initial excavation of this magnificent country estate which later yields jewelry, silver plate and coins as well as outstanding frescoes and sculpture. Other villas of 1st century AD gentlemen-farmers are uncovered nearby in later excavations.

20th Century

Another eruption of Vesuvius takes place in 1906. About 1910 restoration of upper storeys of Pompeian houses begins with work on the shops and homes lining the Via dell' Abbondanza. The next stage in the rebirth of Pompeii is the replanting of gardens after a study of wall paintings and mosaics to determine the most commonly grown plants. In 1927 excavations resume at Herculaneum after a lapse of about 50 years. Careful clearing of the site replaces the earlier tunneling. In 1943 Pompeii is bombed and several houses are damaged during World War II.

In 1944 there is another eruption of Vesuvius. Following the war, scientific excavation and restoration of Pompeii, Herculaneum and nearby villas is resumed; the work continues to this day.

12 August AD 1978

Pompeii AD 79 opens at The Art Institute of Chicago, to be on view through November 12.

L.B. AND J.C.

**Note:* There have been numerous eruptions of Vesuvius since AD 79; only the most serious and best documented are included in this brief chart.

Circular oscillum (hanging ornament)
Italian marble, D. 34 cm
From Pompeii, Naples Museum

Gladiator's helmet, Bronze H. 45.5 cm
From Pompeii, Naples Museum

The excavations at Pompeii as seen from the air, theater at lower left.

POMPEII, ITALY AND THE FILM CENTER

The remains of the vanished civilization so miraculously embalmed by the ashes of Vesuvius leap from their glass cases and gallery walls to rejoin the active company of men and women on screen at the Film Center in our series *The Ancient World: Historical Films and Biblical Epics*. Beginning August 16 and running Wednesday evenings and selected matinees until the first week in November, we will present films ranging from the fabulous Italian spectacles of the early silent era to Roberto Rossellini's last work—*The Messiah* (1975). Interspersed are classics by such directors as Federico Fellini *(Fellini Satyricon)*, Pier Paolo Pasolini *(The Gospel According to St. Matthew)*, Cecil B. De Mille *(Sign of the Cross)*, and William Wyler *(Ben Hur*, starring the ubiquitous, ancient-worldly gentleman Charlton Heston). And, of course, this series would not be complete without *The Last Days of Pompeii*.

History of another sort will be offered at the Film Center in July as film scholar and director David Bradley presents two weeks of productions by two American directors who helped construct the foundations of our national cinema, Cecil B. De Mille and Clarence Brown. Such De Mille films as *The Cheat* (1915), *Why Change Your Wife?* (1920), and *Forbidden Fruit* (1921) are as sophisticated in content as they are in cinematic technique, and will be screened during the week of July 11-14. The second week (July 18-21) is dedicated to Clarence Brown, who turns eighty-eight this year. Such Brown classics as *The Eagle* (1925), starring Valentino, *Light in the Dark* (1924), with Lon Chaney, and *The Goose Woman* (1925), starring Louise Dresser have been programmed. On the Tuesday evenings of both weeks, Mr. Bradley will be present to introduce the series and discuss the careers of De Mille and Brown.

We initiate our retrospective of the films of Roberto Rossellini on July 28, including his *Open City, Paisan, Stromboli, Socrates* and *The Age of The Medici*. New German Cinema director Volker Schlondorff enjoys a series dedicated to his work on Thursdays, July 27-August 24.

Single admission tickets to most films are $1.75, and they go on sale thirty minutes before each screening. Subscriptions are $22.50 to Art Institute members. Films are usually presented Tuesday through Friday evenings at 5:30, with a repeat performance at 7:30. Daily program information may be obtained by calling 443-3737.

SCOTT M. LEVINE
Assistant Director, Film Center

THE SCHOOL'S SUMMER SESSION

The School of the Art Institute's regular Summer Session starts June 24 and ends August 22. Some particularly interesting courses are the following: *Roman Art and Architecture* which will emphasize the art of Imperial Rome and will relate specifically to the Art Institute's *Pompeii AD 79* exhibition; *New Trends in Arts; Performance/Movement Workshop; Art Therapy: Research and Development*. Call 443-3755 to register June 20-21. Late registration is possible the week of June 26.

Young Artists Studios is a special course in which all ages and complete families may participate. Call 443-3777 to register for the Summer Session.

Fall classes of the School (over 200 in number) begin Thursday, September 7 and end December 20. The registration schedule is:
Continuing Students-at-Large: Tuesday, September 5
New Students-at-Large: Wednesday, September 6
Call 443-3755 for an appointment.

The public may now rent or purchase works of art by students from The School of the Art Institute. Selection will be from slides. Call 443-3703.

EXHIBITIONS IN THE SCHOOL GALLERY

June 10-July 7 *Selected Works from the new Student Rental and Sales Program*

July 15-August 4 *Three Sculptors: Margaret Lanterman, Coleen McNally and Aileen Meyers*

Membership Application

Yes, I want to become a Member of The Art Institute of Chicago.

Enclosed is

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Membership Categories:

- ☐ Student 1 year $10
(Enclose copy of student I.D.)
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- ☐ Individual 2 years $35
- ☐ Family 1 year $30
- ☐ Family 2 years $55
- ☐ Contributing $100
- ☐ Life $750

Charge to my ☐ Visa/BankAmericard ☐ Master Charge ☐ American Express Card

Account Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Master Charge Interbank No.: _____ Signature: _____

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Daytime phone number _____

Make checks payable to The Art Institute of Chicago.
Only for new Members, not a renewal notice.

Cut along dotted line.

In anticipation of *Pompeii AD 79* The Department of Museum Education is offering a July-August subscription series of four consecutive one and one quarter hour lectures on the art and architecture of Ancient Rome, with emphasis on Pompeii and other provincial Roman towns of the Campania. The series will be given by George Schneider, Senior Lecturer, just returned from Pompeii. It will be offered at three different hours in the Columbus Drive Auditorium: Tuesday mornings at 11:00, beginning July 11; Wednesday afternoons at 1:15, beginning July 12; and Thursday evenings at 5:45, beginning July 13.

MAIL THIS RESERVATION TODAY

FROM THE ASHES OF VESUVIUS
THE ART AND CRAFTSMANSHIP OF ANCIENT ROME

$40.00 for members, $60.00 for non-members. Please indicate choice of date and send with check payable to The Art Institute of Chicago to Museum Education, The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois 60603. Enclose self-addressed, stamped envelope. No duplicate tickets will be issued.

- ☐ Tuesday
- ☐ Wednesday
- ☐ Thursday

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Bulletin
of The Art Institute of Chicago
South Michigan and East Adams
Chicago, Illinois 60603

Second class postage paid at Chicago, Ill.

Wall Painting from a Household Shrine (Lararium)
1.83 x 1.28 m
Naples Museum
From the exhibition Pompeii AD 79
Made possible through grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and Xerox Corporation